

Small Business Assistance

SMALL BUSINESS OMBUDSMAN:

EPA's New England Office recognizes that the small businesses that fuel the region's economy often have a difficult time understanding and meeting environmental requirements while staying in the black. We've appointed an ombudsman to help small businesses make sense of environmental requirements and find assistance to improve their environmental performance.

Small businesses employ 53 percent of the private work force in the United States, contribute 47 percent of all sales in the country, and are responsible for 50 percent of the gross domestic product. Of the 3.3 million jobs created during 1994, an estimated 62 percent were produced in industries dominated by small businesses.

Small businesses are eligible for many of our business assistance programs, but to ensure that small businesses get the attention they deserve, we have expanded the activities of our Small Business Ombudsman to include the following functions:

- serve as liaison between small business and EPA to improve access to EPA;
- provide regulatory and technical assistance;
- offer a collection of informational and technical literature;
- interface with trade associations, small business organizations, and state ombudsmen who serve businesses on the local level; and
- serve as an advocate for small businesses in agency enforcement cases.

CONTACT:

Dwight Peavey

e-mail: peavey.dwight@epamail.epa.gov

"[EPA's Small Business Ombudsman] has brought the concerns and needs of small businesses to the attention and focus of our partnership—resulting in many examples of assistance and benefits for small businesses."

—New Hampshire Pollution Prevention Partnership

Call 1-888-EPA-7341

COMPLIANCE INCENTIVES FOR SMALL BUSINESS:

EPA recognized that many small businesses want to be good environmental citizens but need information on how to comply with requirements. As required by the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996, the agency has created a policy to help small businesses comply with environmental laws in a common sense, cost-effective way:

The objective of this policy is to promote environmental compliance of small businesses by providing incentives for them to conduct voluntary environmental audits, obtain compliance assistance, and promptly disclose and correct violations. In addition, many small businesses lack the ability to pay a significant penalty. Providing compliance assistance and having small businesses use their resources to come into compliance rather than pay a penalty is one way to maximize state and small business resources, and create incentives to compliance. Through this policy, EPA will provide small businesses up to six months, or up to one year if a pollution prevention solution is used to correct violations identified by a state or federally sponsored compliance assistance program or through a voluntary audit. By providing an extended period to come into compliance, and mitigating or eliminating penalties, EPA hopes to encourage small businesses to request assistance and/or conduct voluntary environmental audits to achieve compliance while EPA continues to protect public health and the environment.

If you have questions about how this policy can help you bring your facility into compliance, contact our Small Business Ombudsman.

CONTACT:

Dwight Peavey

e-mail: peavey.dwight@epamail.epa.gov